

From camphor to offshore wind power : The history of Suzuki & Co.'s entrance to Taiwan and Sojitz's current businesses based in Taiwan

Naokichi Kaneko of Suzuki & Co. partnered with Goto Kaisoten Ltd., which was established in the same year as Suzuki in 1877, to undertake an expedition to Taiwan where Kaneko met with Shimpei Goto of the Government-General of Taiwan, who granted Suzuki the right to sell camphor oil. Suzuki would go on to diversify its business in Taiwan. In the sugar industry, Suzuki established capital ties with Toyo Sugar Refining Co., Ltd. and Ensuiko Sugar Refining Co., Ltd., which were among the top five sugar manufacturing companies in Taiwan. Additionally, Suzuki handled raw sugar for Dai-nihon Seitou and boasted a large market share by handling a third of the sugar produced in Taiwan. In addition to camphor, the Monopoly Bureau of the Taiwan Governor's Office was also engaged in the salt business, with salt sold to Taiwan through Dai-nihon Shiogyo (today's Nichien Corporation) — a company in which Suzuki held equity interest. Suzuki's business expanded to diverse industries including power generation, coal,

wood, and real estate development.

There are photographs of Taiwan's Kangyo Kyoushin-kai from 1916 which provide a glimpse into Suzuki's prosperity at the time.



Suzuki & Co.'s pavilion at Taiwan's Kangyo Kyoushin-kai. The bottle-shaped structure on the right is Sakura Beer, a beer brand sold and manufactured by Suzuki & Co.



A 1917 gathering with Suzuki & Co. and business partners in Taiwan. Yone Suzuki pictured at top right.



Suzuki's star remains on a warehouse in operation at IHI Aioi Works (formerly Harima Shipyard Co., Ltd.)

Iwai & Co.'s Taipei branch office was established in 1981. Trade with Taiwan was conducted under the trading company name, Yoneboshi Trading. It's said this trade name was derived from Suzuki's logo, which included Yone Suzuki's first name alongside the kanji character for star as the character for "Yone" (米) resembles the shape of a star.

At present, Sojitz is primarily engaged in fields such as liquid crystal and other electronics, chemicals, accelerators and other industrial materials, as well as non-ferrous metals such as electrolytic copper. In 2019, Sojitz announced its participation in Taiwan's largest offshore wind power project (640MW) and will continue to supply power through a long-term contract. While Sojitz's business in Taiwan began with Suzuki's use of natural resources such as camphor, Sojitz is now working to leverage natural energy for green businesses in the country.



Sojitz entered Taiwan's largest offshore wind power project in 2019 (copyright with permission by Yunneng Wind Power Co., Ltd.)